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many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*waskat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *sine qua non* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kasyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

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412 when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi* 535 battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

411 The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and, below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and, holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

411 The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2·6 to 2·8 ●224 metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and 7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward thrust.

411 The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The Hill Marias call the bow *villu*, and the Bison-horn Marias *ville*; the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being *ha'undi* in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

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important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *pada*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

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222 off, and eat them raw. The men gather the edible bean-pods of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper when cutting its stems for rope fibre and gathering its leaves for plates, rain hats and shields, but generally light a fire then and there in the forest and roast the beans in the pods, when it is easy to extract them to eat.

B. Hunting and Trapping

224 The Hill Maria is as omnivorous as all Gonds, and it is difficult to discover what he will not eat if he can get it. But there is little game left in the Abujhmar hills, except where the hills descend to the Indrawati, Gudra and Kotri valleys. The *shikaris par excellence* of Bastar are the Murias of the northern plateaux and the Bison-horn Marias of the *parganas* around Barsur and the Indrawati valley, where there is still fairly plentiful game. The Hill Maria is therefore not an expert beater, though twenty-four hours spent by any would-be sportsman in Kutru territory in training Hill Marias to beat will be amply rewarded, not only by the quick way in which they learn, even if taught only by pantomime, but by the fun and humour with which they will take their lesson. They have memories of hunting tiger, panther, bison, buffalo, deer of all kinds, and even, very shadowy, of rhinoceros.[1] But the appearance in the hills of one or two tiger after the 1931 census for the first time within human memory was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure, and all the census house numbers painted by the enumerators on little squares of wood prepared *ad hoc* by the Marias and preserved in many houses for each census from 1911 onwards were collected together and burnt on the village boundaries to placate the Departed. Outside Tondawada village a panther was shot by the village lads with arrows thirty years or more ago; three small stone menhirs about twenty inches high were driven then into the ground at the spots where its head, the root and the tip of its tail had lain when it fell dead; the feat is still spoken of as a deed of prowess. Orcha is the only Hill Maria village, so far as I am aware, that follows the practice of the spring hunt before sowing the crops, which is so marked and important a feature of tribal life among the Bison-horn Marias, the Parjas and Bhattras; but the Orcha people seem to have copied the hunt from the Bison-horn Marias without its religious significance; there is no sprinkling of blood on the first seeds sown, no ceremony before and after the hunt, women take no part in the proceedings to drive unwilling men out to the hunt, and no portion of the slain quarry is offered to the clan-god, the

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[1] Compare *Gazetteer*, p. 32. The rhinoceros tradition still existed in 1928.

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Village Mother or the Departed. Bowmen are posted in advance, and they beat the game up to them. They share and share alike in the bag, no special limb being reserved for first arrow or first spear or anyone.

They all have bows, and arrows of varying sizes and shapes for every kind of living thing, but are not very expert in their use, save in the lower country where game still abounds. There is no bird and no animal that they will not shoot or trap and eat if they can get it.

But in most of their country the only creatures that they can trap are hare, jungle-fowl and pea-fowl. A sure sign of the nearness of a Hill Maria village is the presence of numerous hare-traps (*morsi-guda*) by the side of a path. A small oval of ground is cleared of growth and surrounded either with small boulders or with sticks driven into the ground, and about eighteen inches above it. A passage is left unfenced at each narrow end of the oval wide enough for a hare to enter by one and go out by the other without turning round. The trapper urinates in the oval, and it is a considerate act for any passer-by to do so; in some villages a common urinal pot is kept by the dormitory for use at night, and the urine is divided in the morning between the hare-trappers. The ground inside the oval is soon impregnated by the salt, and hares begin, therefore, to frequent it. When this is known from the droppings which they leave there, the inner passage is blocked up with sticks or boulders, and behind it a bamboo is fixed in the ground to serve as a spring. Two strings are tied to the top of the bamboo, one for the release trigger of the trap, and the other passed through a hollow bamboo tube four or five inches long, to end in a running noose. The release-trigger is a length of thin bamboo stick which is laid more or less horizontally across the oval, one end resting lightly against the inside of one wall of the trap, and the other placed under the 'tap' of a bamboo stick fastened in the ground by the opposite wall of the trap; the 'tap' is a short length of stick branching downwards from the main stick. The tap stick is called *dim-kola*.[1] The noose is looped over the entrance to the trap, the bamboo tube being hung on one of the wall sticks or rested on one of the boulders. The hare enters through the noose to get his salt, dislodges the release trigger from the side of the wall opposite the tap stick, and so releases the spring. As this flies up, the bamboo tube slides down the other string towards the noose and helps to tighten it around the hare.

Pitfalls covered lightly with earth and leaves on criss-crossed sticks, and with spears or bamboo spikes planted in the bottom,

[1] *Dim* means penis.

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224 are made in game paths for deer. A form of trap made by Hill Marias, but commoner among Jhoria Murias and Bison-horn Marias, is the *bewar*; the *penda* or *dippa* plot is surrounded by a high fence or stockade, called *bewar* in Halbi and *ganao* by Murias and Marias. A space wide enough for a sambhar or two to enter is left in one wall of the enclosure, and this is cleared of all growth, swept clean daily, and sometimes spread with sand; this is called the 'road' (*sarak*). At another point in the fence, generally the corner remotest from the 'road', they leave a narrow exit passage, 6 or 7 feet long and 1½ feet wide at ground level. The whole floor of this passage is dug out to a depth of 6 feet, and spears and sharpened bamboo stakes are planted in the bottom. The sides of the passage are walled with slanting poles, the top of which is 7 or 8 feet in vertical distance from the ground level; these lean on vertical posts about 4 feet high, and have horizontal pole struts lashed on both sides by *siari* thongs; the passage is thus 1½ feet wide at ground level and 4½ feet wide at the top of the walls. At ground level, tufts of grass are fastened under the bottoms of the slanting walls to form fringes meeting in the centre of the trench and concealing its existence. This passage and trench are called *korrpanch* in Gondi and *onkakodra* or *kalkodra* in Halbi. At dawn the cultivators creep up to the 'road', and if there are any deer-tracks in the sand they make all the noise they can, and the deer, if still inside the fence, dash for the trenched passage, and fall through the grass floor into the spiked trench.

The illustration opposite shows a panther trap erected at Handawada in 1934 to catch a small panther that had been carrying off village poultry. Between a double row of thick bamboo stockading standing from 50 to 53 inches above the ground and roughly lashed together about 32 inches above the ground, with lengths of split bamboo twisted round every fourth or fifth bamboo, were two fall beams weighted in the middle with heavy stones, and a little over 18 feet long, called *kalk-panj*. The stockading was strengthened by boulders piled around its base. The farther end of the *kalk-panj* beams rested on the ground and the front end was raised about 20 inches above the mouth of the stockading by a cross-beam of timber 7½ feet long called *adam-guryu*. The farther end of this cross-beam itself rested on the ground beyond the off side of the mouth of the stockading, whence it slanted upwards at an angle of 30 degrees between the second and third posts of the stockading walls, resting 19 inches above the ground on a horizontal bamboo pole 34 inches long called *mirpos-kola*. The *mirpos-kola* ran along and parallel to the near wall of the stockading, with its centre resting in a fork half-way up a post planted in the ground, the

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mirpos-rai. The *adam-guryu* cross-beam rested on the front end of the *mirpos-kola* bamboo; to the back end was tied a piece of *siari* twine about 9 inches long with a short stick at the end to serve as a release-trigger. As in the hare-trap, one end of this trigger was held vertically under the 'tap' of a bamboo *dim-kola*, while the other end was held from escaping inwards from under the 'tap' by being thrust outwards by the near end of a piece of bamboo laid as a bait-stick across the floor of the trap; the off end of the bait-stick was fixed against the inside off wall of the stockading. The *dim-kola* tap-stick was 12 inches from top to ground, into which it

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FIGURE 8
(Drawn by Mrs. A. M. Boyes)

was firmly driven outside the near wall of the stockading and between the stockading and the retaining boulders; the 'tap' was about 4 inches above the ground-level. The ground was slotted across the mouth of the stockading from the point where the *adam-guryu* cross-beam rested on the ground, so that that beam, when released, might fall into the slot. The bait-stick and the floor of the trap below it were baited with very 'high' dead mice and their guts; the Marias evidently believed that panthers shared their own partiality for these delicacies. If any animal had put his head inside the stockading and touched the bait, he would have been bound to dislodge the bait-stick. This would have deprived the lower end of the trigger of its support; the upper end, deprived of the resistance of the lower end against the bait-stick, would have

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sprung free of the ' tap ' of the *dim-kola* and so released the back end of the *mirpos-kola*, the front end of which would have given way beneath the weight of the *adam-guryu* cross-beam and brought the stone-weighted *kalk-panj* fall beams crashing down on to the animal, while the *adam-guryu* fell into the slot prepared for it in the ground. The trap had been set for six weeks with no result, and they had not tried making a trap of this kind for years. It looked too fragile for any but a very small panther ; the bait-stick was barely 2½ feet from the mouth of the trap ; and the fall even at the mouth was only 20 inches. Kalmu Boda, the expert *shikari* who is *pargana* headman of the Bison-horn villages around Barsur, was openly scornful.

Snares and springes for pea-fowl, jungle-fowl and snipe, and bird-lime for other birds, with occasional nets for birds or deer complete the Hill Maria's hunting equipment. I have not seen him using nets ; the villages where most nets are to be seen are those near the Bison-horn country, and their users presumably copy Bison-horn methods.

Bison-horn Maria hunting

In the most advanced and thickest populated parts of the Bison-horn Maria country, such as the Paknar, Katakalian and Kuakonda tracts, it is difficult to find any wild creature except birds and insects. In Hindu India the monkey is always present, being sacred and so free to devour anyone's crops. The Maria eats monkey as readily as any other animal, and the monkey long ago decided to avoid his lands. At my camp at Katakalian there was a sudden shout and dozens of Marias left me to rush at a tree on which someone had seen a luckless flying squirrel (*Pteromys petaurista*). Even hares and rats are said to be less common here than elsewhere. Like Hill Marias, Bison-horn Marias spend hours digging out field rats and mice, carefully wrapping each victim in grass before carrying them home in glee to roast them whole skewered on bamboo spits, singeing off the fur. They sell and buy rat meat in the markets, either raw, or in little jerked squares on bamboo spits ; but that they are getting sensitive to ridicule on this account is shown by the fact that the buyer must ask for ' earth-roots ', not rats or mice. Frogs are another delicacy, also spitted and roast. Python, *daman* and non-poisonous snakes are eagerly sought after ; for ordinary eating they skin, slice and fillet the snake and stew it with spices, when they say it tastes midway between fish and chicken. Small portions of python separately cooked are regarded as a valuable cure for ' pot-belly '.

The great round of ritual vernal hunts preceding sowing have been the chief cause of the extermination of game. The religious

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aspect of these will be explained in a later chapter. But for these *parad* (Halbi) or *weta* (Bison-horn Maria) whole villages or *parganas* used to turn out all their able-bodied males, and beat over a stretch of jungle ten miles long and a mile wide into nets with spearmen standing ready behind them to slay every animal that escaped the arrows of the beaters, who often fired the forest grasses as they went. Stops were put out along the flanks, and the beating was expert. It is not unnatural that game was rapidly exterminated. For some years they attempted to come in large *weta* parties to the well-stocked jungles in the Muria country of the northern plateau; 500 bowmen and spearmen from Chhitapur and Killepal *parganas* were stopped in 1929 by the Bhanpuri police from raiding the Amraoti Forest Reserve in Kondagaon tahsil, a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India. They now know that they must confine their *weta* to their own *pargana*, but they feel this to be a hardship. In the Kuakonda *pargana* they have had perforce, as there is no game left, to give up the *Jur-weta*, the hunt in which the whole *pargana* joined a week after the chief village hunt, the *Wijja-weta* or Seed-Hunt. At Killepal in 1930 they said that for some years they had secured no game except a hare in the *Wijja-weta*, though they had gone out for it; in a little while in such regions the ceremonial hunts will end, except the *Kare-weta* or Grass Hunt, which precedes the *Kare Pandum* or Grass-cutting Festival some time before the *Wijja-weta*, and in which they beat the fields for hares, rats and quail.

Where there is still ample game, they hold the *weta* as of old, if perhaps on a smaller scale, with the *Jur-weta* becoming a thing of the past. Kalmu Boda, the *pargana* headman of Barsur *pargana*, and the Bison-horn Marias of the *pargana*, especially those of Boda's village of Pharaspal and the surrounding villages, have the hereditary reputation of being the most skilful netters of tiger and other game in the State, and for many years the State authorities have requisitioned their willing help in getting rid of man-eating tigers in northern Bastar. They hunt in this way for sheer sport, not merely as part of the ritual round of the year. In May 1932, I was a guest with others at a shoot arranged by my successor at Koilibera in North Antagarh to get rid of some troublesome man-eaters; and, to assist, Kalmu Boda had marched over 100 miles from Pharaspal with 140 Bison-horn netmen. As it was essential to get rid of the pests, we could not, unfortunately let Boda organize the beats as he would have done if left to himself; a line of guns in the usual *machans* was posted in front, but Boda posted his nets and men behind them. The nets are arranged in a line about five feet above the ground on bamboo props, and secured at intervals to trees;

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224 they must be loose enough to fall on any animal driven into them by the beaters and entangle it. Some twenty paces behind the nets the Marias make little shelters of leaves, about fifteen yards apart, carefully camouflaged from the front, and in these shelters groups of four or five spearmen stand motionless. They do not move till an animal is clearly entangled in the net, but then there is a rush of men to have the honour of the first spear. The first man stabs and holds the animal down with his spear, while the others blood their spears. He gets as his portion the off hind leg from buttock to hough, the headman gets the saddle, and the *waddai* or clan-priest the liver, the portion usually given to the Departed. At Koilibera I saw deer, four-horned antelope and a panther netted in this way and duly dispatched. On the last day a tiger, shot at but missed twice from the *machans* in front, hurled itself at full gallop into the net twenty yards to the right front of the shelter where I was standing with a group of spearmen. It fell headlong, and the net fell on to it according to rule; but unfortunately at that point the rope meshes were old and brittle, and the ground rocky and grassless; the tiger's weight and speed smashed the retaining rope and burst a hole through the net. There was a brief vision of a mighty forearm sweeping aside the encumbrance, and the tiger was free; he rushed roaring by the side of the next clump of spearmen, so close that they could have touched him. Wisely all stood stock still from the moment when the tiger entered the net till it had passed them; but then one of the guns from a back *machan* not so wisely fired over the heads of the line of spearmen. Whether he hit the tiger or not, he enraged it, and it swung round to charge. Those of us on the ground with rifles could not fire at first because the tiger was not clear of the line of spearmen; but a rain of rather wild bullets, one of which broke the tiger's near forearm, checked him, and Kalmu Boda gave it the *coup de grâce* (possibly saving more than one life) by hitting it in the neck with a contractile bullet fired from an ancient twelve-bore gun, rusty and unoiled, with barrels patched with rough iron bands and held together with wire, and as loose in the breech and stock as a gun could be. The bullet killed the tiger outright. Boda had missed twice and misfired once before the final shot. The Murias and Marias present drummed the tiger back to camp with their usual anapaestic rhythm, and the Marias broke into a dance, advancing and retreating before the dead tiger to the same anapaestic drumbeats.

The Bison-horn Maria is an adept at nets and snares of all kinds and sizes for all manner of game. Kalmu Boda has recipes for poisoning tiger and other game. For poisoning arrows they use occasionally the crushed seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* shrub;

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the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar
[2] See pp. 103 and 130.

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beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Neniŏr new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bámboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

heap offers an egg and a tooth-stick (*datun*), sometimes also a miniature bow and arrow; he then takes up each tooth-stick in turn, splits it and throws down the split halves to test the omens in the way already described, after praying with folded hands to the Forest-maidens for success in the hunt and protection from wild beasts. Then he takes an arrow off the altar, and, holding it by the shaft just above the feathering, cuts the top of each egg with the sharp edge of the arrow-head.

The omens having thus been taken, and the bows and arrows of the altar, if any, reclaimed by their owners, all the men go off with their weapons in the *weta* ritual hunt to beat the forest for game. The women appear with pots full of cow-dung and water, into which they dip sprays of leaf and shower the foul water with fouler abuses on any laggards. If any animal is slain, the shedding of much blood on the ground is regarded as foreshadowing plentiful rainfall and a rich harvest; on the spot where it falls they cut little bits off the tips of its ears, nose, tongue, feet and tail, place each bit on a separate *saja* leaf on the ground in the name of the Forest-maidens or of Karenga Deo, and pray for a continuance of this good fortune. At the end of the hunt they take the carcasses of the animals back to the *mahua* bough erected in the name of the Village Mother in the *kadri-bera* field, and leave them there. They then go home for supper.

Towards midnight each man returns to the *kadri-bera* with his bow and arrows, a small packet of *kutki* and other grain seeds wrapped up in leaves, a little *mahua* liquor and a white cock; a pig is also brought for all the villagers. Some villages do not expect each man to bring a cock, but purchase a number of cocks by *sari-bori* subscription. The men hand over the packets of seed to the *perma*, who piles them on the ground in front of the *mahua* bough and places his sacrificial knife beside them. He then prostrates himself before the *mahua* bough and prays to the Village Mother for good and timely rain and bumper crops. He then puts each cock and the pig through the *tokana* rice-eating test, and sacrifices them one by one, cutting their heads off from the throat upwards, piling the heads all together near the *mahua* bough, and holding each body over the pile of seed-packets and the *mahua* bough to soak them well with blood; he then throws the bodies aside. Next he breaks with his knife in the Mother's name the egg which he had set up in the morning, and pours some *mahua* spirit on the ground before the *mahua* bough. The *perma* and the men of his family then roast and eat the heads of the cocks and the pig, and each other family the body of the cock contributed by it; when cocks have been bought by subscription, the *perma* slices

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhopal

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Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking puda, peking puda* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligumdi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dassera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *angrâw*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

Fig. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every [782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Bezur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

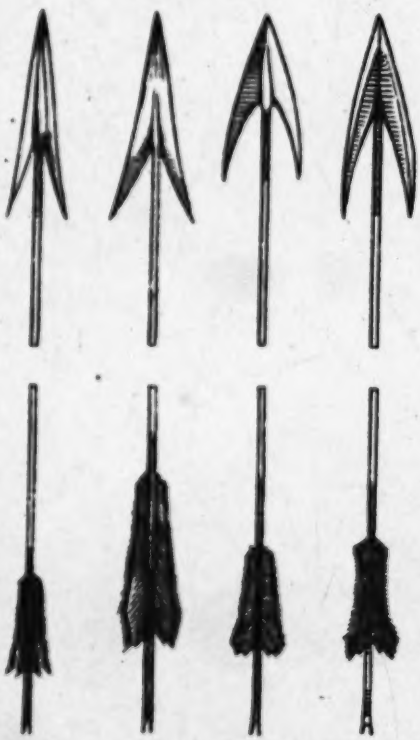

FIG. 10. ARROWS AND ARROW-HEADS
Length 2' 5"

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikhal mälli kariya mäma khärigär khärigär shikäri shikäri!
Tupak säja kiwa mäma.
Mälli gondi tupäk mäma.

Gopär kewar tova mäma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

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Tumór mara jhāka māma.
The machan is on the ebony tree, uncle shikari.

Jhāka sāje kimu māma.
Make the machan there, uncle shikari.

Ghotiya kāya goli māma.
Make bullets like ghotiya fruit, uncle shikari.

Jhāḥą udi dākat māma.
We will go and sit on the machan, uncle shikari.

Nāwa suda waiki bāncha.
You must come with me, nephew shikari.

Wāteh icha waiki bāncha.
If you are ready, come with me, nephew shikari.

Māoku wāteh pehchhāt bāncha.
When the sambhar comes we will shoot it, nephew shikari.

Hāle mara māri bāncha.
On the hill of sal trees, nephew shikari.

Akey khojin oyhāt bāṇcha.
We will go to search there, nephew shikari.

2

Kainākе gulel dai kainākе dori wo dai sona kainākе gunel?
What is the *gulel* made of, what is the rope, mother?

Bāns ke to gulel bābu san sutri doriga bābu.
The *gulel* is made of bamboo, and the rope of hemp, my son.

Kainākе ghora dai kaịnākе phata wo dai?
What is the horse made of, and what is the bridle, mother?

Bans ke to ghora bābu sut ke to phata bābu.
The horse is made of bamboo, the bridle of thread, my son.

Kainākе dhuti dai hainākе ke gulla?
What is the basket made of, and what are the pellets, mother?

Bāns ke to ḍhuti bāḍu māti ke gulla.
The basket is made of bamboo, and the pellets of earth, my son.

Koni hāt men gulel dai koni hāt men gulla?
In which hand is the *gulel*, and in which the pellets, mother?

Deri hāt men gulel bābu jewni hāt men gulla.
The *gulel* is in the left hand, the pellets in the right, my son.

3

Taina nāmar nāna re nān nāmar nān ho

Māligondi tupak tun bor sāje kindur ho?
Who made the Maligondi gun?

Māligondi tupak tun mistri sāje kindur.
The carpenter made the Maligondi gun.

Teka marra hata tun bor sāje kindur ho?
Who made the stock of teak?

Teka marra hata tun bar-ki sāje kindur.
The carpenter made the stock of teak.

Kokre kil bakre tun bor sāje kindur ho?
Who made the trigger of the gun?

Kokre kil bakre tun mistri sāje kindur.
The carpenter made the trigger of the gun.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

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Māligondi tupak tun bor payal ūndur ho?	Who holds the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun singāl payal ūndur.	Singal holds the Maligondi gun.
Adu bādu patār tun singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal took the gun to the jungle.
Ikla kur dulki patār singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal went to hunt by a spring.
Ghotiya mara daram te bodāl hunjil māta ho.	He found a bison asleep by a ghotiya tree.
Barbara kursi manji singāl udil ūndur ho.	Seeing it Singal prepared to fire.
Jirra barga tikti tun singāl mūnde kindur ho.	Singal placed the support for his aim.
Saw sawa kursi manjil singāl dābe kindur ho	Singal fired the gun with care.
Ting tokli tokli lariyo bodāl mutil ūnd ho.	By that shot was the bison killed.
Ringri hāpa linga laya gorhā-wātil ūnd ho.	Linga boy stood like a small brinjal ready to kill it.

4

Are tina nāmur nāna re nāna nāmur nāna na ho tina nāmur O nāna nāmur nāho, tina nāmur nānāho tina nāmur na. Hurre, hurre, hurre

Ho bhālu heto dera re ho kahān ohar dera.	Where is the bear's home, where can it be?
Are bhālu heto dera re ho jhāpi khāle dera.	Under the bushes the bear has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Are kodri heto dera re ho, kahān ohar dera.	Where is the deer's home, where can it be?
Kodri ke dera re ho gudri upar dera.	On the low hills the deer has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Hurre, hurre, hurre.	

IX. Falconry

223 While cock-fighting is rare in the east and common to the west, hunting with a hawk is known all over eastern Kondagaon, but is rare among the Jhoria Muria and in the west.

Muria boys get the hawks when they are very young and train them carefully. They teach them to catch small chicks, keep mice for them in little bamboo cages and train them by withholding food and then rewarding them with morsels of frog and lizard. They 'hood' them by closing their eyes with feathers thrust through the lids. When mature the birds are able to catch quail, partridge, snipe and sparrows, though it is said that they are not able to kill a wood-pigeon.

A hawk is kept in the verandah of the house perched on a specially made pole round which an old bit of fishing-net is wrapped. It is tied by an ingenious

Plate XIII

516
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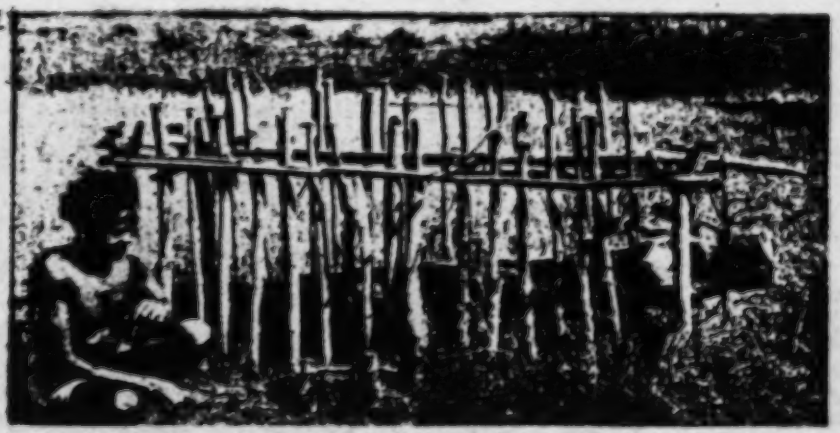
Sheik of Macora roasting a rat

A porcupine trap near Lohatar

224



[P. 52(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIV

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The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Almer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt

[p. 208(B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

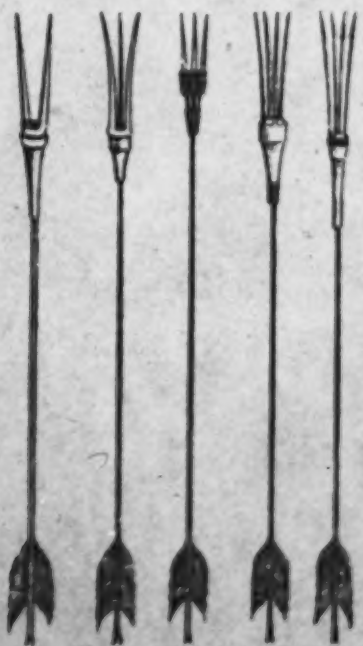
[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there 796 787 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engrum arrows
(Length about 3')

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

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[facing p.49]